

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

New Bethel Baptist Church

Personal Experiences

O.H. 1672

LEROY J. SELDON

Interviewed

On

October 26, 1993

By

Philemon Rheins

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: LEROY J. SELDON  
INTERVIEWER: Philemon Rheins  
SUBJECT: New Bethel Baptist Church  
DATE: October 26, 1993

This is an interview with Leroy Seldon for the Youngstown State Oral History Program. The interviewer's name is Philemon E. Rheins and the topic is The New Bethel Baptist Church of Youngstown, Ohio. This interview is being conducted at 2620 Stocker Ave. On October 26, 1993. The time is approximately 7:12 p.m.

R: Deacon Seldon before we get started I would first like to thank you, on behalf of the Youngstown State Oral History Program, for letting me come into your home and just taking the time to grant us this interview concerning your life and your involvement with the New Bethel Baptist Church. I'd like to thank you Sir. It is very much appreciated. To begin Sir, could you tell me just general things about yourself such as where you were born, and your parents, and things of that sort?

S: I was born in Surrey County, Virginia. Yes Sir that's way back there. My Dad was a minister of the New Bethel Baptist Church and my mother was matron of the church. I had one sister who's been dead since 1962. That's a poor way to put it but that

## LEROY J. SELDON

Leroy J. Seldon was born the son of James and Classie Seldon on October 26, 1921 in Surry County, Virginia. In 1939 Mr. Seldon graduated from the Rayen School and also attended Youngstown College. In 1941 Mr. Seldon obtained employment at Youngstown Sheet & Tube and remained there until his retirement in 1980.

On August 25, 1950 Mr. Seldon married his wife, Lucille, and became the father of two children. The eldest child, Laurence, was born in 1957. Two years later his daughter, Linda, was born. The organizations Mr. Seldon are affiliated with include the Urban League, the NAACP, Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity and Masonic Lodge #59.

Mr. Seldon has been a life long member of the New Bethel Baptist Church. He is now recognized as the most tenured parishioner and is a past recipient of the church's "Man of the Year Award". In addition, Mr. Seldon is also a member of the church's Deacon and Trustee Board.

This interview transpired on October 26, 1993 at the interviewee's residence, which is located at 2620 Stocker Ave, Youngstown, Ohio. The time was approximately 7:12 p.m. (NOTE: Mr. Seldon sometimes qualifies his responses by referring to his wife.)

is one way I could put it. There's nobody but my wife and I. We have two children scattered around. We have a few grandchildren.

We have been around the Bethel Church for 35-40 years, something like that, 50 years. We have been taking part in the Bethel Church and every activity that's in there; we played a part in it. I've been a Deacon for about 40 years, 40-50 years, something like that. I've enjoyed doing the work. I've done everything from chairman to just a member on the board. I've taken care of a lot of activities, and I've enjoyed all types of work because we take care of so many things.

New Bethel Church has been a mother and a dad to me, if I might say that. There have been so many things that have been carried on in the church. We just once in a while we just take toll of what we have done over 25-30 years. Now I haven't done this in quite some years, but we always try and take care of the church because, as I said, it has been a mother and a dad to me.

It has been interesting because anytime you meet three or four hundred of our people and get them together in church service, you've got something. Lord, you've got something. It's amazing things to talk about our church because our church is a \_\_\_\_\_ with so many people. We've got the best Christians in the world and the best sinners in the world. We have some of the best seat givers. What I mean by seat givers is that they give up their seats to someone else when they come into church. But it is just an amazing thing that I enjoy. For the last 25-30 years, I have just enjoyed being in the church itself, because we meet so many different people, strangers, preachers, regular people and all kinds. When you have met as many people as I have you have to kind of sit back and watch yourself. Watch what you say today. It will come back to you

tomorrow. That has been an enlightening thing to me. We talk about the church and we have some of the best Deacons and best Christians in the world. When I say in the world, I mean of the world, because there are so many people that you never know them until you have sat down and talked to them for eight hours straight, and you see why they are like they are. Some have been born of a good nature, and some haven't been. You meet so many Deacons and Preachers and so on and so forth, and I am wondering a lot of the time about some of these people. I stand back and I always get a lesson from each of these Christians, because of the fact that they have a different idea than mine.

R: Sir, I was wondering, do you remember when you were born, the birth date?

S: October 26, 1921.

R: It has been quite some time.

S: Well count it up.

R: Okay, I wanted to ask you do you remember much about Virginia, Sir? When you were a kid, do you remember?

S: No Sir I don't, I don't know too much about Virginia. I came from Virginia when I was two years old and after having stayed here for about 25 years I finally wondered back home.

R: Home Virginia?

S: Home Virginia. That is after 25 years I finally found myself going back home to see how it was, because there were so many things that I didn't know anything about.

R: And that's concerning Virginia?

S: That's concerning Virginia.

R: So you grew up here in Youngstown?

S: Yes.

R: Which side of town did you grow up on Sir?

S: All sides, I'm sorry to say that in that manner because that sounds so vulgar but North side, East side, West side, South side.

R: You've lived on all sides of town?

S: All sides.

R: What is the first house that you remember living in? Or do you remember the street Sir?

S: Oh yes, I remember the street, Caldwell. That's down in the River Bend area. It's a street down there off of Rayen Ave. Which has been consolidated into scrap places or business or what have you. They have rebuilt here and torn down there and added some on there. Therefore, you can't find anything that can make a logical historical home, because the houses having been torn down and dispersed. So many families moved out of this area. We see a small multitude, when I say multitude I mean ten thousand, twenty thousand people in this area that have moved away from this ground. They have scattered themselves in town, out of town. Everywhere you want to go they have scattered.

R: Do you remember, Sir, what the house looked like that you lived in? Down on Caldwell?

S: Oh yes, I remember that. Yeah, this little house had six rooms in it, a bathroom, a cellar, and a place for cutting wood. Oh yes, we had a lot of activities at that time. We had wood cutting time and coal cutting time. We did chores of different kinds, we had all of these things inside the house, you know in the cellar. My plot was to be sure that I cut

enough wood and to be sure that I broke up enough coal to last us through this day. This is really something, I broke up so much coal in my years, I don't think it has, even up until now, it hasn't run out yet. There is still some of that coal left from those years that I used to cut.

R: That was something your father made you do?

S: Yes Sir, my father had me doing that, my mother had me doing that, and big sister had me doing that. I was just a regular Joe. I was really something, really something, I'll tell you. It's been a joy and an experience, because some of these things I've never failed to remember them, even after this long time. Those things taught me so much fortitude. Coming up in the church started at home.

R: Could you tell me something about your father Sir?

S: Yes Sir, My dad was a minister, a Baptist minister.

R: And his name was?

S: Reverend James Seldon. When I first knew my dad he was a preacher. I remember him from all of those lasting years. You know how it is, some people learn by doing, but I learn by remembering. He was a gracious old man, very, very gracious. He knew one thing though. He knew the Bible. When I say knowing the Bible, he knew it. He could bring you anything from Genesis on up. He could tell you who his brothers were and who his sisters were and who was the family and how they managed, how they got along, how the church managed. Those were years, when I say years. I said they were years of learning. Being a young man at that time, I was open for all kinds of information. This old man he didn't teach me anything but manners. Lord have mercy on my soul, that old man taught me manners. He says now you be sure to speak to a man

and speak back to him, now if he doesn't speak back to you, just say good riddance and go on your way. This old man he knew his English too, this old man was something else.

R: He was a well-educated man Sir?

S: Ahh well, what was his age, ninth grade, and eighth grade. But at that time you could take an eighth grade man and take any high school graduate around and you couldn't keep up with them. That's if he knew his business. There were a lot of men who had more, a great deal more in fact. But this old man knew his business. As I said about the Bible and the scripture, he knew the scriptures back and forth because they used to have a union here with preachers. At one time he was a historian for this group of men. He could tell you anything about the Bible that you wanted to know.

R: Was he a local pastor Sir, or did he work in the mills?

S: He worked in the mills. He did some construction work here, that old man was something.

R: And that was up in the Briar Hill area.

S: The whole section, all of this was Briar Hill compared to him, because he has preached out here at Oak Street for quite some time. He preached out here at Reverend Steel's church for a while. He just preached all over this place. The old man was really a nice old man.

R: Could you tell me something about your mother Sir?

S: Yeah my mother was a nice lady. She was very quiet, very quiet, you never heard too much from her unless it was something from the history of the church. She could tell you what the church was about and what its members were doing. She could tell you



about what the flock was doing there. She could tell you what the church's purpose was. This was a generous old lady. I'll tell you the truth, it seems like only yesterday that she passed, and she's been dead since 1942. No, 1946. She was a good cook too. I've lost a lot of weight in these last twenty years, that's when I was doing my own cooking. I was weighing 240 lbs. I was busting my belt, and I could cook it too, whatever it was I ate it, I managed. Since Lucille and I got married, well she's tuned me down some. She's a very good cook. There are just so many things that I could tell you.

R: Did you go to school when you lived down in the Caldwell Street area?

S: Oh yes, I went to Butler School. I went to Hayes School and then to Rayen, that's where I graduated from.

R: Okay.

S: Then I went to Youngstown University.

R: Rayen High, You went to Rayen High. Do you recall what year you graduated?

S: 1941.

R: 1941, do you remember anything special about Rayen School then?

S: Well I'll tell you about Rayen School. Rayen School was an energetic school. At that time they were one of the priorities in this district in schooling. When you talk about schooling, they had the character, and they had the attributes of being a school next to college, as you would call it as such. They had a criterion that once you took an exam going into Youngstown University, they would put your record on sheets. They kept them for a number of years. That's what they've got now, they used to have that, of course now things have changed a great deal since the new attitudes in school have come about. We had some good students there and good teachers.

R: Do you remember any of those teachers Sir, by chance? Anybody special?

S: Oh Holloway, I remember him, he was my cabinet teacher. Holster was another one, he was blueprint and how would you say it? Anyhow he took care of all of the blueprints, drafting. We had a woman named English. Ooh, I will never forget English. This woman was an old criteria. When I say an old criteria, you know an old criteria is something that you base everything on because everything that you get it comes from around this person. So I say that she was an old criteria because she had all of our education on tip. What I mean by that, she could look at you and tell you what grade you'd make. After you've gotten out of her class and you've been in there for three years, you've gone somewhere else and she'll remember you. This old lady had a history, oh she had a history. I'll tell you I've learned more English from that woman than I've learned since. Now there are a lot more teachers that I could remember but I don't rightly recall all of them.

R: Did you have some special friends that you remember?

S: Oh I had a fellow named Claude Dikes who was a dear friend of mine. I had a fellow called Mayors; he was a dear friend of mine. I had Otis Coni, Roy Coni, Edward Coni, these were all friends of mine. We went around everyday. We were a bunch that sometimes they'd hate to see us coming because we went in a crowd, four, five or six. Wherever we went, you knew we were there. We never did too much damage because anything you'd mess up, you'd have to fix up. So it was something.

R: Okay and you all went to dances and things of that sort?

S: Oh definitely, we went to dances, oh yeah we went to dances all over. New Elm at that time was in its height.

R: The what? What was that again?

S: The New Elm Ballroom.

R: Could you tell me about the New Elm Ballroom Sir?

S: The New Elm was a ballroom and you could put about 600 people in it. It was nice.

R: This was located where Sir?

S: On Elm Street. We kept this for years because we liked it but we didn't like all of the stuff that went on there. We took care of it though because we knew that if we teared it up we'd have to fix it up. We took care of this building for 20-25 years.

R: New Elm Ballroom.

S: New Elm Ballroom.

R: Do you remember any of the entertainers who might have come there? Were they big names?

S: All these big names that you see on sheets of paper now, came by the New Elm Ballroom.

R: Like Cab Calloway maybe?

S: Cab Calloway and Arty Shaw.

R: Ellington maybe? Duke Ellington.

S: Duke Ellington was here, oh yes. We had all of the big orchestras come by here and give us a shake of the night. Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, all of them. If they didn't come by one time, they came by another time. When they came by here, they let you know that they were coming. We'd have a full house they'd say. When you say full, it was full. Oh man, we had some times. Sometimes we'd go there and turn the ballroom

out. We never did too much fighting; we were the docile type. Docile, very docile. It was just an enjoyment to witness this. The big bands came. The small bands came. Then after so many years the place became dilapidated. Then it was torn down. It's amazing how we used to write stories about the New Elm Ballroom. It was just lovable, the story we would write about it was sometimes terrible and sometimes it wasn't terrible. It was just like it was; we really had some good times there. They brought a lot of money here, the bands. When they came in they came with big bands and they left with big band money. I'm telling you the truth; they left with big band money. When they'd come in here, let's say they bring 150 people or 200, with their whole gang, all of the people they've got. When they left, they left with the bank because we loaded them up, everything they could sign, everything they could see, everything they could remember, we loaded them up with it.

R: How much did it cost to get into a dance then?

S: Well a dollar and a quarter. Oh yeah a dollar and a quarter, a dollar fifty cents. Sometimes it was three dollars. But that depended on the band, if the band was large like Duke Ellington or someone like that they'd charge us three dollars. That was it, oh what a time, what a time. We've had some good times and we've had some bad times. When I say bad times I am referring to the fact that we had a lot of people come in and visit with us. When they came to visit, they would pay fifty cents to get in. They weren't there the longest time with the band; they'd come in and just visit with us. This was it. But oh we had a good time.

R: This is what you did during high school. Can you tell me after you finished school what did you do then?

S: I worked on the NYA for one.

R: The NYA, what is that?

S: It's a group amongst school kids; you were in the upper end of your classes.

Tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and you worked in this building downtown. The building had all kinds of machines in it. They had photography machines. They had automechanics, and we had trucks. We just had everything in this big building because it just housed everything that we had. If they wanted to work down there, they had to go in and talk with the boss so that you could work and they would put you on the job. You had to be capable though, no fighting. That was one thing that I really like about the NYA, they really cared about the youngsters that were dependable. If they said something that you could depend on for sure. They had a shop in there; we used to work in the shop. They had a dressmaker's shop. They had auto mechanics, just everything. We enjoyed it. This is the only way we made a little extra money on the side. We worked in there five days a week. This is how it was.

R: Did blacks and whites work together Sir?

S: Oh yes.

R: Really?

S: Oh yeah, we worked together.

R: No problems among each other?

S: You know how black and white is. Anywhere you see a black man, if you want to raise your hand you cause him some trouble, by talking to him nasty. My gang was good, my gang was good for that, and we'd always be fighting on that account.

R: Outside of that everybody tended to get along?

S: We got along well. See years ago this whole area, which we called the River Bend area, was three quarters white, the other quarter was the blacks. We used to all live together. Oh it was something. You would sit there and wonder what would happen to us with all of these white people around. We all got along. We made that that way. We would put up a fight if there were a whole lot of trouble. But we got along pretty good for blacks and whites; we didn't have too many squabbles. We learned that when we got to working with whites that I'm going to obey my business and you obey yours. We didn't want no name-calling or nothing like that. We did a fairly decent job.

R: I'm going to ask you one last thing Sir, How did you meet Mrs. Seldon?

S: I met her; I met this girl, that's been some years ago. Some years ago we were going to church and I knew her aunt and I knew her dad, and they were talking about a niece. I said what? She said yeah I've got a niece, and I want you to meet her. We met when we were twelve. Was it twelve? I think it was around ten or twelve. Something like that. All those years and she is just as nice as she's ever been. She's just as nice as she can be.

R: And you don't recall around what year that was? Was it the thirties, the forties Sir?

S: It was the forties. The forties those were good years. I say they were good because I had a nice girl and she could cook too. Oh my lord she could cook. She could cook me anything. If she wanted a turkey, she'd cook him, if she wanted a rabbit, she'd cook him. Any different ways that she wanted it she could cook it. She was just the nicest person and I just waited on her, you know.

R: And the year that you got married Sir, do you remember?

remember all of the preachers that were over me, under me, whatever you might call it, at that time. I knew all of them.

R: You mentioned Reverend Greer; do you remember what he looked like Sir?

S: Reverend Greer was a man about 5'2, small featured, new to The Gospel, and he knew how to preach. He was a spiritual intellectual man, he knew the spirit and he could really preach the spirit of the gospel. He knew the Bible. That was one thing about those old men back then, they knew the scripture. They could tell you anything you wanted to know out of that bible. If they couldn't find it, they would go back into the studies and find it for you.

R: Was he a great singer?

S: He was a good singer, but he wasn't much of a singer. He sang some songs but you know he wasn't a great singer.

R: Do you remember where the church was located at this time?

S: 209 Reserve Street at this time.

R: That is located where, or was located where?

S: Well I can't tell you where it is because it has been gone for some years. It was on Reserve Street and that was down there. If we get together one day I'll take you down and show you where the church was, if we can get in. This church was small and it was intelligent. What I mean is the preachers; most of the preachers that were surrounding this church knew the scripture. When I say knew it, I mean knew it. They could take you from Revelations all of the way up to the front of the Bible. They could tell you and if they couldn't find it or they didn't know it, they would find it for you and bring it back to you.

R: Do you remember any of the early members that were attending, well Bethel at that time?

S: Well yes, at that time there was a number.

R: If I gave you some names could you tell me about a few of these people by chance?

S: Well sure, if I know the names.

R: Okay how about Richard Carswell?

S: Richard Carswell was my old friend. When I say my old friend I mean he was a trustee at the church. He knew the church. He and some of the family who was residing around the church, and he was relative to them. Sister Morris, she was in the family too. These people were cousins.

R: How about Mrs. Willabell Lewis?

S: Mrs. Willabell Lewis was my old friend. My old standby, when I needed something I went to her, in the scripture.

R: She was a deaconess?

S: She was a deaconess, oh yes. She was a very good charter member too. Oh she was something.

R: Could you describe her for me in terms of physical?

S: She was a small lady, brown skin. She was intelligent. What I mean by that is you couldn't fool her on nothing. If you told her that you were born on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of September, she would say now you weren't there so how would you know? I'm talking about what they told me about my birth. Oh yeah, she was something else. She was a fireball. When I say she was a fireball I mean she was a fireball, because she would tell



you what you thought you knew. Oh she was something. We got some more members, I can't.

R: Did you mention anything about Cora Bird, Carswell Bird?

S: Sure Carswell Bird, they were all in the family. Carswell Lewis

R: Who was a son I am assuming. Would he be any relation to the late Reverend William Carswell by chance?

S: Yes, they were all family. They were all family folks. Richard Carswell was his uncle. They were all family folks; there were two uncles in there. I know this Richard Carswell was much older and he knew everything. He knew his stuff.

R: Okay I was just doing some asking around I came across the name Bacon.

S: Deacon Bacon was a member of the New Bethel Church. I think he died in the fifties or sixties. He died around that time and he was a deacon and a trustee. He knew the church. His wife was Mary Bacon. They had some children but I can't recall.

R: Do you recall a Miss Marzella Corbik? Do you recall her by chance?

S: Yes, I remember Miss Marzella Corbik. She was the secretary at our church; in fact she was the first.

R: And this was around what year, do you recall?

S: 1936 or 37, somewhere in that area. I think Marzella was our first or second secretary of the church.

R: Could you tell me about Reverend Anderson Sir?

S: I'll tell you about Reverend Anderson. You call him J.P. Anderson. The reason I know you call him J.P, that was his initials. He was a speaker. He was a real dear. Oh yes, oh yes he was a college man. This man could tell you about the five cessatudes of

religion. Where they came from and how they came about. He could tell you what the man was preaching about when he went up on the mountain. Boy, this man could tell you something. He had the story laid out so that he could just reach back and grab one name and then he could bring that name up. He'd tell you so many things about it you would just have to cut him off and go somewhere else. That old man knew his business. He knew the Bible.

R: During this time, I know you were a young man, what were you involved with? Was it the Youth Choir or?

S: We sang in the Youth Choir. We sang in the Mass Choir. We sang in the Senior Choir. We were all, in that time, with the choir singing because we were not able to hold any major jobs. We were in the choir because that was the only out you could get. I was the Assistant President of the choir. You never got to be President because they were the head of the jobs.

R: Was there anybody playing for the choir then or directing?

S: Yes, Louella Corbett played for the choir. What was that woman's name?

R: Lucille Anderson or?

S: She was later. Madison Clinkscale. Madison Clinkscale stayed with our choir for 35 years. He has been playing longer than that but he stayed with us for that long, to keep the choir going and keep it together. We were something. We could go anywhere and sing. If you sang the accapella, we sang it. If you sang the spiritual, we sang it.

R: Variety music, Gospel?

S: Oh sure. We used to sing. That's all we were worth at that time is good singers. We really had a good time.

R: Sir, could you tell me about Reverend Bailey, R.J. Bailey?

S: Yeah Reverend R.J. Bailey knew his scripture, he knew the Bible. He knew the Bible backwards and forwards.

R: Do you remember what year he came into New Bethel?

S: In the thirties, he was there in the thirties. About 1935, somewhere like that. He was a good minister. He's the one who kept us together for all of these years. He stayed, he was a good minister, he knew the Bible and he could tell you about anybody in the church. He loved to sing.

R: From what I gathered he was a painter or a contractor? Was he instrumental in the building of the old Bethel church?

S: He was instrumental in building the New Bethel Church because when he became ill in the church, we were just about finished building at that time. Any number of years in that period, 7-8 years, he was there. As I said he kept the church together. There were a lot of things going on.

R: New Bethel was quite a church at this time.

S: When I talk about my church, I am not talking about nothing else but a family church. We used to get in there and we would get the devil in us, Lord have mercy. I'm not going to say anything else about it.

R: Fair enough Sir. Could you tell me what happened to Reverend Bailey?

S: Reverend Bailey got sick and died.

R: This was around what year Sir?

S: Let me see, what year did that man die?

R: You are not really sure Sir?

S: I am thinking. I'm trying to figure out what year, and I should know. In fact, I should remember because I was there when he died. But you know how it is, your brain goes one way and things go another.

R: I understand Sir.

S: I can't recall.

R: Can you tell me about Reverend Perry?

S: Reverend Perry was a nice gentleman, a Christian gentleman. I say they were all Christians due to the fact that they knew the scriptures. You could test them on anything you wanted to know about the scriptures and they would bring you right down front on it. Anything that you wanted to know, they would bring you right down front. Most of the time whatever they said about the church was just about true. Reverend Perry was an honest to goodness man. He was just good. Sometimes when we get into the little by-ways and highways, you start to talk about things. We wouldn't ever talk about them too much because it would sometimes bring hard feelings on the preacher. We would never talk about that.

R: From what I can understand, he was never officially called Pastor in New Bethel? Is that true Sir?

S: No, he was called, but he wasn't called as a minister at this time. He was called because I know that we had many church meetings on it. Sometimes there was animosity among the Deacons and the Trustees. All we did was to sit there and listen. Very seldom did we voice our point or opinion, because we never wanted to pass judgment because of how he was going to get up and talk about what Reverend Perry, was going to say. So we never said too much about him. There was a lot of animosity.

R: Did that cause a split in the church by chance Sir?

S: No there was no split. What they would have liked to have done was to split. A lot of people did want to split, but we held together. The reason I say we held together is the fact that there was no split. There were all kinds of animosity about. You didn't do this right or you didn't do this right. So we never cared too much about splitting up. We just held them together, those few members, we could hold. Some scattered here, some scattered there. But there was never any split between the church. Whatever splitting that we had was along the lines of the church, when we call a pastor. There was a lot of squabble about you call this man and we didn't want this man. So what are you going to do with this? We're going to stand right here and we are not going to say anything else about it. Just let it die, and that is just what happened. This new breed of church coming up now from the forties. Whatever changes took place in that era stayed as it is now. It was a lot of squabbling. As I said, we never did squabble because first of all they tell you to sit down. I could tell you something but I ain't going to do it.

R: Could you tell me about Reverend Lonnie Simon? When he first came into New Bethel?

S: Yeah, the church was progressing good. The church was gathering up members real good. They had a lot of new members and a lot of old members. It had a lot of Christian people and some non-Christians. What I mean by that is they come in this week and join the church and then the next week they are up in the front. They would raise a ruckus and they would raise sand but then they left. Reverend had some good years, many good years. I know he had some "flesh" years. When I say flesh I mean Reverend would sit there and he would try to think of something that he could say that

would keep it quiet. Well he did a good job. The thing that really puzzled me was about some of the things they said. We, as the young folk in the church, never raised too much. It was always the older folks who wanted to question this. They always wanted to get an answer on this and that. Reverend has done a pretty good job throughout his years. In fact he had some of the best years that a man could have.

R: Do you remember when the church moved to Hillman Street, Sir?

S: Sure.

R: Why did they move to Hillman Street?

S: Well the building was going to be torn down.

R: Okay the old building is down in the River Bend area.

S: It's gone.

R: Okay, it was down in the River Bend area.

S: We had to move someplace so we were searching out a building and this church was for sale. So this time we just kept tabs on people who were renting this church. We kept tabs on them for about a year. Between a year, six months, eight months, within that time period we had already acquired the church.

R: And this was what year Sir?

S: 19, oh lord, where's my head now?

R: Was it somewhere in the sixties Sir?

S: 1961.

R: Somewhere in that area, 1961.

S: We had a time really acquiring the church. What I mean by that, you had six going one way and ten going the other. So you had to keep them all quiet and work on

what you're working on because if you didn't you'd lose out over here, because somebody's talking over here. It was an experience.

R: So in other words, it wasn't a consensus to move to Hillman Street at that time. There were some who didn't want to move to that area?

S: Most everybody wanted to stay where we were. But we couldn't stay because of the fact that it was the River Bend area and they were going to move all of these buildings. They told us that they were going to move all of these buildings. They told us that they were going to move all of these buildings, and you might as well get ready to go.

R: Do you remember, Sir, when the first lady was licensed to preach there, at New Bethel?

S: Yes, I remember a lady.

R: Do you recall who it was?

S: That's what I'm thinking about right now. My God, Help me Lucille.

R: Was it Miss North by chance, was she the first?

S: No she wasn't.

R: Mrs. Powell, or she never was?

S: No Mrs. Powell was just a visitor. She was a friend of Reverend Bailey's. Not Bailey, I'm sorry.

R: Reverend Simon perhaps?

S: Simon. But I'm trying to see, oh my God, isn't that strange. Now I used to think of her name all of the time.

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R: You can't quite remember, okay. What was the property like at that time at New Bethel?

S: Property at that time was pretty decent. Now the church that we acquired was much larger than the old church that we had. It had quite a bit of property too. I was trying to bring that lady back to mind.

R: That's okay Deacon.

S: I just can't think of her.

R: Would you like to take a rest Sir?

S: I don't need no rest! Okay, she wants to talk so let her talk some.

R: Okay that's fair enough Sir.